

The Feast

By Sophie Thompson

The Feast

Woman

Man

Guest

Set in a simple and strangely out of date house, in a living room with 70's style furniture that is mismatched. A sofa is against the back wall. There is also a music machine, a side table or drinks cabinet and a few lamps. There are family photos on the wall, mostly of themselves and their wedding day. A taxidermy wall decoration is hung in the centre of the back wall above the sofa. There is a window on the left through which the impression of natural light must glow. There is also a door on the right which is open and through the open doorway we can see a suggested hallway with a glass panelled front door. Naturalistic light should glow through this also. As this will take the place over the characters whole day the changing of light is important as it is the only signifier of time passing. There are many cushions, unlit candles and a full length mirror hangs on the back on the open door. Although there is no visible clock, there is the sound of a clock ticking quietly however it is noticeably a little faster than normal to sound slightly absurd.

This sign / signifies that the character not speaking should speak their next line so that the characters lines overlap. (...) signifies a long beat.

For the opening a dim dawn light glows through the cracks in the curtain over the window and through the front door. After a while the sounds of a technical object being turned on and handled are heard. A projection flickers onto the back wall and we see a woman staring fixedly into the camera which rests in her lap. (This can be pre-recorded). She clearly has had some trouble getting the camera working but now points it at her husband who remains asleep in bed. Her hand comes into shot and she proceeds to play with and poke his face. He does not stir as she plays with his mouth, laughing silently. He begins to wake softly and without moving lies relaxed and with his eyes shut. She repeats her action and he smiles.

Woman: Hey Baby! How you doing?

He groans quietly.

Hm? It's a beautiful day.

He opens his eyes slowly and looks at her.

Isn't it?

Her hand comes into shot and pushes the tip of his nose up. He grumbles. She puts on a voice.

Hello Mr Piggy.

He turns his face away.

Oh don't be shy baby, you're on film! Famous! You're famous.

Her voice becomes muffled. She turns the camera onto herself and we see that he has covered her mouth. The hand goes out of shot and she focuses back on him. He gets up slowly.

Why are you so dopey? Wake up it's our day today!

The camera flickers off. We hear them moving about offstage, sometimes talking or laughter and then the sound of someone coming 'downstairs'. The woman enters. She walks to the

curtain and opens it, letting stronger light stream in. He enters with two cups of tea, one which he gives to her kissing her on the back of her head before collecting the post and sitting down to read. They are in dressing gowns. There is a long pause.

Woman: Is everything ready for the feast.

Man: *Reading.* Hmm? Oh yes, I prepped the chicken last night so that can just go straight in, and the bubbly, glasses and table are all out and ready. *He tears open a letter.*

Woman: Fabulous.

Pause.

Jacks taking his bins out! They've been drinking more. I can tell from here. Perhaps they're getting separated. He's getting chubby.

Pause.

Oh I loosened the waist of your trousers for you and sewed the button back on.

Man: I wish you wouldn't tell me things. Just leave me in the dark. I don't want to know.

Woman: Alright, but what if I hadn't?

Man: No I mean do it, but don't tell me, I don't want to be reminded that I'm getting older and fatter each year.

Woman: Oh I'm sorry sugar.

Man: Especially on our big day when I want to look my best ... You're gonna look all sexy and smart in that dress and I'm gonna look like a sad old man.

Woman: You are a sad old man.

Man: Well yeah baby but don't rub salt in it. Else I'll get grumpy. And it's our day isn't it?

Pause. She goes and sits down beside him resting her head on his shoulder.

Woman: I still fancy you. However sad, fat and old you are.

Man: Thanks. That's sweet.

He kisses her on the forehead and continues reading the letters.

Woman: It looks like it's going to be a beautiful day; I can almost feel the warmth of the sun on my skin just sitting here. Maybe we should have some fun in the garden today.

Man: Maybe.

Long pause.

Woman: Those curtains need a good wash.

Man: Really. How do you know?

Woman: They look grimy. Look, at the bottom where they touch the floor and at the sides where we pull them across.

He looks.

Man: Well, you don't want to do it now do you? Just try and ignore it for today. The house will need a good scrubbing down tomorrow anyway ... do it then.

Pause.

Woman: Shall I grab the Hoover? Give the room a quick zap?

Man: Just sit with me for a minute and drink your tea, if we get it all done too soon we'll have to just sit and wait for it to be time. You're too excited.

(...)

Woman: Why have we got so much post? Who's writing to us?

Man: I haven't touched the post for a good four days now.

Pause.

Woman: Why?

Pause.

Man: Because ... I don't know, I wanted to sit down and give them some of my time.

Woman: Hmm. *She drinks her tea then gets up.* Don't forget to drink your tea before it gets cold. *She leaves.*

He looks up whilst opening another. We hear a Hoover whir offstage. He looks a little annoyed but does nothing. It gets steadily louder as it comes closer and into the room. She hovers the whole set as he reads. Some he screws up, some he keeps. She hovers back out the room and shuts it off, comes in and sits back down next to her husband.

Man: Better?

Woman: It does look better doesn't it?

She sits back down and rests her head back on his shoulder. Pause.

Can you pay me some attention now or are you just really interested in the post?

Man: Oh God yeah alright. *Putting the post aside and taking her in his arms.* So how are you feeling this morning gorgeous?

Woman: I'm too excited!

Man: I know.

Woman: Aren't you excited?

Man: Yes, but I'm enjoying the peacefulness and I like to feel the day passing by. I'll get more excited the closer it gets.

Woman: I know. I've seen it.

Man: Yeah.

Pause.

What do you want to do first this time? Last time we had break/fast and then ...

Woman: /I don't want breakfast this time it ruined my appetite. I want to be starving, you know, begging for it!

Man: Do you? Alright then. No breakfast. But what first then?

Woman: I don't know. I want it to be evening because I hate waiting, but then it's always just over so fast, then it's the big clean up and then it's just back to work where no one shows us any respect.

Pause.

Everyone there is so fucking boring, seriously how do they live like that. What do they do for fun? Drink I suppose. And they call that normal.

Man: At least you get to talk to people. I'm on the floor all day on my own. I fucking hate my job. I'm going to quit. Maybe I could be something like a security guard or a postman. Something like that.

Woman: You've just picked two jobs that include wandering about by yourself.

(...)

You need something stimulating that has a routine but is a little bit challenging: something in construction or on a hospital reception.

Man: Isn't that a bit too many people.

Woman: Just do what I did and find somewhere that's full of saddos.

Man: But you hate your job.

Woman: I actually like my job! I like the noises and the smells, I even like that I have to be friendly all the time, and that men flirt with me...

Man: Who flirts with you?

Woman: ...and that I get to take home leftovers. I like getting up early and having the rest of the day to myself. But it's those people. All they talk about is work. They are at work why do they need to talk about it? And then they want to go out for drinks or dinner together to 'get away from work', but work is the only thing we all have in common. None of us are friends by choice so what is the point?

Man: At least they want to talk to you. My customers can barely even say 'hello'. They don't even buy anything! How are they even still open? I didn't even think it would last the year, do you remember?

Woman: Maybe, you should get a career / picking up hitch-hikers.

Man: / I could do something builder like. It might keep me in shape you know. And I could whistle at ladies all day while other men flirt with you.

Woman: Well there you go, sounds like a dream, and builders usually have like four topics of conversation so you'll always know where you stand.

Man: Building. Girls. Porn.

Woman: Pub.

Man: I'll get better at lifting things and / fixing things.

Woman: / I wouldn't get too sold on the idea it's gonna keep you fit. Most builders are fat.

Man: It's all that porn, and all that pub.

Woman: Hmm, how about working in a nice quiet shop?

Man: Ha-ha. So what first?

Woman: First I think I would like a cigarette.

He looks at his watch.

Man: Yes Mam.

He goes to a draw and pulls out a box. They are obviously expensive cigarettes. He pulls one out and pops it in her mouth then lights it for her. He does the same for himself. They smoke a while.

Woman: And secondly...

Man: Secondly?

Woman: Secondly, I have a surprise ...

Man: A surprise?

Woman: Is it too early for real fun?

Man: What? No, go on, what's so special?

Woman: Guess what I've got.

Man: What have you got?

She runs off stage and we hear her opening and closing a draw. She stands in the door frame.

Woman: I have got ... *She reveals a small piece of paper ...* The official number of that kid's family.

Man: Which one, our one?

Woman: No, this was a couple of years ago. And she was like ten when she went. They're still looking. But she's dead.

Man: Of course she's dead... So you gonna speak to them.

Woman: Her, she's single and yeah well I found the helpline online and after a bit of digging last week and a few important phone calls I found her home number.

Man: Ha-ha brilliant. (*Excited*) Go on then, I want to hear. What's mummy like?

Woman: *She rummages in draws for a mobile and unpacks a new sim card from her pocket as she talks.* Well she's single with a missing kid, so probably a drinker and fragile...

Man: Good, good.

Woman: ...the police didn't take the case seriously at first. I think that's why there was so much of a fuss. She's common, you know, a chav, on child benefits and more kids than she could keep an eye on. Perfect really! And so our day officially begins...

She fiddles with the phone then dials. It rings for a long time then we hear the answer phone. He looks disappointed.

Ok hang up, I wanna try someone.

Woman: *Leaving a message.* Hello this is / special detective Harper calling for...

Man: / What the fuck she'll have to call back!

She covers the receiver and signals for him to be silent.

Woman: ... for a Mrs Redding, we have some new information concerning your daughter Makayla. It is very important that you get back to me so that I can explain the situation...

We hear the phone being picked up and a desperate voice on the end of the line. She smiles at her husband then goes on...

Oh hello, Mrs Redding thank you for answering, I'm from ... yes ... I would like you to try and remain calm Mrs Redding, but a few days ago we found a young girl wondering about on her own and ... yes well, she does match Makayla's description ... Well we had to be very sure before getting your hopes up or causing any distress, and she does match, the only thing is that she is in shock ... well she hasn't spoken a word, so we couldn't be certain of name or age, or what she remembers but she was found stripped and quite badly beaten ... (*We hear that the woman is very upset*) I'm sorry Mrs Redding but I have to be honest with you ... it is clear to us that she has suffered some kind of abuse yes ... I can understand that and I promise you she is in safe hands now ... we have specialists with her right now ... you're very welcome, it's quite frankly a miracle. Young children that have been missing for this long are most commonly never found ... yes well this is extremely peculiar, she was discovered by a police patrol car in Ecuador ... Yes ... We can only make an educated guess really but it's possible ... young children are commonly trafficked into Venezuela from Ecuador ... Yes it is, but we have no way of telling where she has been up till then I'm afraid ... the best thing to do now is to relax a moment, I'm sorry to make you anxious but the only thing you can do is to get to the station tomorrow and we can discuss how we are going to go about putting you back together ... well, we can't tell what she will remember ... yes ... yes that would be a good idea ... and perhaps some of her toys or favourite clothes that she might have had an emotional connection to ... of course that's important ... you're welcome, I look forward to meeting you ... no need to phone, we will know who you are ... yes I will tell her ... she needs to remember she was loved and cared for yes ... I will tell her ... alright? Thank you Mrs Redding, you should try to relax for now and get ready for tomorrow ... yes you're welcome, I can't begin to tell you how wonderful it feels to have good news ... Goodbye ... Detective Harper, Olivia ... yes ... Goodbye Grace...

She is smiling sweetly, almost as if she is buying it herself. She gently hangs up the phone. There is a pause. He exhales a long breath.

Man: That ... was ... spectacular!

Woman: She was hysterical! *She takes apart the phone chews on the sim card before putting it all back in a draw.*

Man: You didn't even falter, that was remarkable my love, / well done.

Woman: / She's going to bring loads of her old toys and clothes, they made a shrine in her old room you see which have loads of photos, clothes, toys, things she made, blah blah blah. She's going to call everyone she knows and they'll all believe it. She sounded pretty thick to me.

Man: Oh my god her face when she turns up, they're not gonna know what to do! Oh fuck it'll be on the news! We're gonna be on TV! Oh baby I love you!

Woman: The best prank ever played?

Man: By far the best yet pet! Could you imagine if it had been us that took that kid?

Woman: ... Next time we should totally do that, oh my God that's brilliant!

Man: Promise me that'll be the next one, we'll do it with the / next one

Woman: /Yes, I promise, and I'll do it again.

Man: Exactly the same.

Woman: Well a performance is never the same twice; you should really know that by now. But yes, along those lines.

Man: You are ... divine.

They kiss.

Woman: It means we have to go younger. The little ones cause the most fuss. / Older people go missing all the time.

Man: / I wish I'd filmed it. If I'd have just caught that on camera ...

Woman: Are you listening? It means we have to go younger.

Man: That'll be alright babe? It'll provoke a reaction but that's the half of it isn't it? It's like the next step up, we are moving up the ladder: each time just getting better, more powerful. Come here gorgeous! *He pulls her onto his lap.* You've got me all excited.

Woman: Me too, I need to do something, let's do something; let's just scratch her up a bit please.

Man: *He laughs.* We'll get there. Anyway it's hardly even the afternoon yet ... I'm so proud of you. Look how far you've come. At first you would watch and film it. Do you remember? And now look how far you've come.

Woman: I picked them up.

Man: Yes you did but that was the next bit, do you remember how it began? You were a blank canvas.

Woman: You were hardly a pro. You hardly embraced it did you?

Man: You wouldn't have been this without me.

(...)

Woman: Perhaps not.

(...)

Man: You said that it was me who inspired you.

Woman: I said that I was better than all those girls I knew at school and I would have been completely wasted on those poor excuses for boys. I said I wanted a man. I wanted the most interesting man there was else I'd get bored! And what's more interesting than a dangerous one?

There is a long pause, they look at each other and he stokes her face.

Man: I think it's time to get dressed don't you? Put our smart things on? *They kiss.* Okay, you put your things on and I'll sort the feast.

Woman: I love you.

He kisses her, gets up and leaves the room. She sits a while and we hear things moving in the kitchen. There is a dull thud from somewhere else in the house. She looks stonily up at the ceiling. There is a pause then she moves to the stereo and puts on some music. Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' plays softly. She goes to the window, looks out and then leaves leaving the door open. There is a wait while she changes. We hear the song and the sound of cooking in the kitchen. She re-enters in a formal dress, it is mid length and girly, she carries a pair of heels which she puts down and using the mirror on the back of the door she puts on her jewellery. She admires her figure. The song ends. There is silence as she gets out makeup. Then she goes to the player, repeats the song and continues with her makeup. Once done, she lights the candles positioned round the room, she sings along sometimes, climbing on furniture to reach difficult places. We hear him call to which she calls back. When she still can't hear what he's saying, she blows out the match and leaves the room. They both enter a little time later carrying and low rectangular table. The actors can ad-lib around this moment of placing the table. When it's down she moves it into the right place and he gets cushions. He throws them at her face as she shrieks trying to catch them. They position them on the floor. He goes to get the food as she lights more candles. She then goes to the music cabinet and puts 'Thriller' on again. She pulls out the cigarette box and brings it to the table. He leans in the door frame watching her whilst wiping his hands on a cloth. He is now dressed in smart shoes and trousers with a matching jacket. Underneath he wears a black long sleeve top and a gold chain. Not noticing him she sits herself on the cushion and pulls out a cigarette from the box and lights it with a candle. She sits smoking looking out of the window. She sees him and blows a kiss. He leaves the room. Next is the bringing in of the food. It is important that there is lots of it! It is a full roast split between various serving dishes. As he brings each dish in she organizes them on the table, squeezing them all on – it should look full. Throughout the eating they do not use either plates or cutlery but they proceed to tear the meat from the bone and eat with their hands. When the table is set they both leave and we hear a loud pop and a scream. They enter with a bottle of champagne and glasses. They take their places.

Woman: This looks beautiful!

Man: *Raising his glass.* To an extraordinary couple!

Woman: *Raising hers.* Hear hear!

Man: Who yet again have achieved greatness! Here's to our future! *They kiss.*

Woman: Cheers! *They clink glasses and drink deeply, draining them.* Now for the feast! I'm bloody starving!

All the way through their conversation they eat and drink constantly, shredding their food, stuffing it in with their fingers and talking with their mouths full. They are giddy like two children who've been abandoned with an entire cupboard of snacks but the excitement of their freedom is still there before the fear that their parents might never come back settles in!

Man: This feast is for all the times I wasn't allowed my dinner because I'd misbehaved or, you know, accidentally knocked something over. And for the times when she went out before dinner so I just sat at home hungry. Bitch! I couldn't have brought friends round! I'd just have been embarrassed. Not that I had many of them but I still lost the ones brave enough to come over in the first place. Started just hanging round the playground by myself. Just used to walk round in circles. Once this kid, Jamie Gunn, what a cunt! He kicked a basket-ball directly at my head. It surprised me so much I just went straight over! And the others never stopped talking about it! It really wasn't the funniest thing to ever happen at that school but they still wouldn't let me forget it. I don't know, I guess it probably looked pretty funny, you know when you have one of those 'out of body' experiences and sort of float above yourself and look down, and you see it from their perspective, and it's really funny. That happened. But they don't like it when you laugh with them. Suddenly you're even more of a twat!

Woman: Kids can be little pricks can't they?

Man: God I hated them, but I still really wanted to impress them! Why is that? Huh, I went to school drunk once. Do you remember me telling you? That day dad was clearing out the attic, didn't realize until after it was because he was actually off for real this time, and I'd had a peek in the boxes when he'd shuffled off somewhere. And I found this vintage bottle of red wine! It was dark and dusty, and I think I just immediately liked how heavy it was. I recognized the way it looked meant it was valuable and didn't think twice. I just took it and ran into my room stuffing it into the back of my bottom draw under my pants. I couldn't get to sleep for ages that night just thinking about it. I set my alarm an hour earlier for the next day and got up really quietly. I'd stolen this wine glass when my parents went to their beds and, still in my pyjamas, pulled them both out of hiding. God it looked even nicer: the dust had rubbed off but it had this deep frosted look. I peeled off the plastic and realized it was corked. I remember really panicking and trying to be really quick and quiet when I went to find that bloody corkscrew. But I couldn't find it anywhere! I heard this creak and just bolted back to my room without it. I ended up using a biro, my little knife, a pencil, a key and the tail of my toy dinosaur, to break that cork to bits. There was only a tiny bit left that I couldn't quite budge so I stuck my whole thumb in and pushed as hard as I could using my whole body weight. Then suddenly with this huge sucking, squelching noise it just gave in and this warm red wine exploded from its neck and got me straight in the face! At first I cried because it had got me in the eyes. I'd danced about the room with my eyes scrunched tight, drenched in the stuff, and trying to find something to wipe them with. But then I just laughed, everything about it was stupid when you looked at it properly. I used some pants to clean my face and then I got scared cause it was on my pyjamas. I ripped them off my really quick and hid them right at the back of my cupboard under my shoes. I inspected the carpet but it was fine, so I crouched down completely starkers' now and poured myself a glass.

He pours himself another glass.

Woman: Your mum came in?

Man: No, I just crouched there sipping it. I really hated it at first. I was disappointed. To avoid the after taste I just filled my mouth up again straight away after every gulp until I had drunk at least half the bottle and then decided I quite liked it.

Woman: How old?

Man: Ten at least I think. I got really dizzy and stupid whilst trying to get dressed for school, kept full on just toppling over or into the walls and dropping my school things. Mum screamed, called me a drip, picked up my school bag and brought it crashing down on my head so that I fell headfirst into the bottom stair.

Woman: You went down the stairs? You didn't tell me that bit!

Man: No, I was stood at the bottom of the stairs when this happened. No. All day I got these funny looks. I was properly drunk and I think a lump had started to show on my forehead by then. I remember that people found me funny, but it was different, they were talking to me, asking me questions and daring me to do stuff in class. I got sent out a lot that day. But they all loved it! It carried on into playtime where I was dared to like the bottom of my shoes. It was fine though, didn't mind, it could've been worst right? So when it was my turn I dared this Jamie guy to dissect this bird we'd found dead poking out from under this bush. I gave him that little pen knife I would carry around and dared him and he just stared at me like I was fucking mad, but then everyone else started to chant, 'DO IT, DO IT!' and he had to, cause it wasn't just me that wanted him to. We told him he had to cut it up and take out each bit and lay it around it until it looked like it was exploding in slow motion. He got half way through and it was looking soo good but the bell rang and we just had to leave it. He threw up later that day and everyone teased him for being such a fucking sissy. That was one of the funniest days.

Woman: I thought your dad noticed it was gone.

Man: Yeah, he looked more sad than angry, didn't really say much, I suppose he felt guilty or something cause he knew he was going. Nah, it was mum that lost it. I'm glad she's gone!

Woman: Wish I'd done it! I had this friend call Megan, a tiny little thing, she looked like a pixie, but she was alright, she found me hilarious! You know what girls are like that age, just really silly. We would go through her mum and dad's draws and dress up and we made prank calls of course!

Man: Oh yeah what would you do?

Woman: Oh just the normal stuff, you know, but I used to do this really good one which was like, I'd call up and pretend to be a prostitute.

Man: What?

Woman: Yeah, if it was a man I'd pretend that I'd left something there and I needed to come get it. I'd say like I'd left my handcuffs and you can hear him getting shifty and embarrassed but then he'd keep you talking even though he knew I'd got the wrong number. And if it was

a woman I complain that I'd previously done business and hadn't been paid and stuff. It never really added up cause I didn't have addresses or names but it had them scared for a bit, hot under the collar you know. It was fun!

Man: You little skank! So she was your best friend?

Woman: I've told you I didn't really have any best friends, just lots of 'friends'.

Man: Yeah you were popular. How was that for you?

Woman: Oh come on, just cause you were the class weirdo.

Man: There was this kid called Elliott who was kind of a best friend for a while through high school. I don't think we even really liked each other that much just didn't have much choice; we just kept each other company and I think we both appreciated it. He had severe acne, like his skin was bad, the worst I have ever seen. There was not a bit of his face that didn't look red raw. He got teased for it quite a lot. Not as much as he did after I spread this rumour though. He'd given up on me when I had my episode, the wanker! He just completely fucked off, avoided me every day like I was contagious. So I started this rumour that his acne wasn't just on his face but it spread all over his body and that he'd once showed me his cock, complaining to me that wanking really hurt so he was always really frustrated and would only do it if he really couldn't help it. Everyone called him 'Spotted Dick'! He knew it was me. He moved schools soon after that. I kind of think it was true, at least I'm pretty sure it was because he could have just whipped it out to prove it wasn't. Well he got me back anyway, went and told everyone I'd gone bonkers, that I'd been seeing visions of death and slashed up the backs of my legs. I shouldn't have started the rumour.

Woman: Why again?

Man: Why what?

Woman: Why cut your legs?

Man: I dunno, drain the badness away.

Woman: No I mean why the legs?

Man: Oh, dunno, I was a kid, it just made sense. Less ... on show?

Woman: I was going to be called Elliott if I was a boy.

Man: You never cut yourself?

Woman: No. I was never really particularly unhappy. I don't think. It never occurred to me. And I'm a wimp. I don't like pain.

Man: Do you think we'd still be partners in crime if you were a man? Elliot?

Women: Maybe, I'm not sure we'd be sharing a bed but you never know.

Man: Some people are just meant to be. Like that's what I think about our girls. Sometimes it's just almost so convenient or easy it's like ... how can you not do it. How can you not just grab them there and then? They're just asking for it.

Woman: If we were able to switch bodies, still married, still the same people, just imagine if magically for one day we were transported into each-others bodies.

Man: You mean swapped? But we'd see ourselves through / the others eyes...?

Woman: / But it's you in the others body. Yes. Would you have sex with me?

Man: Yeah! Hang on, so I'd be ... It would be like I was having sex with ... myself. But I'm in your body. / Why are you asking this?

Woman: / Oh, hmm, I suppose it would be a little bit like we were having sex with ourselves but I'm asking cause we'd be able to feel what each other feels, like learn first-hand what the other one likes.

Man: *Slowly.* Ye-ees but I would have to wear a blindfold, I don't want to see my face, especially my cum face.

Woman: Priceless, you'd be in for a treat. I don't think I would mind. / A one-time opportunity to have a male orgasm, and not just any male, yours.

Man: / But you're prettier than I am.

(...)

I do get it and I am interested in what you get out of it all but I'd definitely not want to see myself or find out that I was / rubbish in bed.

Woman: / We could both wear blindfolds.

Man: Yeah but it's just stupid we'd just be like ... *(He does an impression of blindly patting his surroundings until he finds and gropes her breast. They laugh.)*

Woman: It would be funny.

Man: Well it's also impossible so we'll never know. And you'd tell me if I wasn't making you happy wouldn't you? If you weren't satisfied?

Woman: I probably would have cut you up already if I wasn't. *She laughs.*

Man: Well that sound's promising! I can live with that.

Woman: Just keep buying me pretty things and you'll be alright.

Man: It's amazing isn't, how good we are together? For five years now nothing has gone really wrong, we do what we want and it makes us happy. I mean what we do only makes us stronger each time doesn't it? And cleverer? We've out-smartened them all! And if you look back, we

started so small. I remember how you would look up at me all wide eyed and young and would just let it happen around you, looking all sweet and curious.

(...)

Woman: Nothing wrong with being curious. I was able to see what you were doing wrong.

Man: What does that even mean? We did it together.

Woman: You were just saying how I stood around all sweet and curious like.

Man: I didn't mean ...

Woman: You don't have to get all defensive; you should be grateful I was curious enough to stand back and watch, you were making some silly mistakes and you'd already made one lucky escape, I didn't want to get dragged down with you, not right at the start.

Man: You really believe you can smile your way through anything don't you?

Woman: Do I? Well it's worked so far, I'm employee of the month after all. *She grins widely at him with her mouth full.*

Man: Well yeah I think you're doing a great job of fitting in. You're fitting right in with all the trash.

Woman: One of us has to.

Man: You even watch trash on TV like all the rest of them. Is that just homework or are you really just getting into it, is it your guilty pleasure? To snuggle up with a glass of wine and a Twix to watch Greys-fucking-Anatomy? My God you've turned into a sap, you watch 'one born'? What the fuck do you wanna watch that for? It's full of common muck with their arses and muffs full on out that they haven't been able to see, let alone shave, for months and they're just screaming their tits off.

Woman: It's funny, why do you care what I watch, I get home and I'm tired, I wanna watch something I don't have to think about.

Man: Don't have to think? There's blood but it's mixed with shit: blood, mucus, slime and shit! Babe if that's what you wanna see, come upstairs right now and I'll mix up a fresh batch for you.

Woman: Oh just get over it will you!

Man: And the people are always / just so thick.

Woman: / I like it when the families are all together and I like it when the dads cry.

Man: *Engrossed in his food.* God! You couldn't have hacked that – it tears you up from the inside. You would be a nightmare in labour. Swearing and ripping the poor civilians to shreds

with your insults! *He chuckles, imagining this.* Don't mind watching it but you can't hack any real pain can you?

Silence.

Woman: What?

Man: You're a wimp really. You said it a minute ago.

Pause. She stares at him dangerously.

Man: What? ... I ...

Woman: *Steadily.* What the fuck?

Man: Oh babe I'm sorry it's just something I've always thought about. How am I supposed to just not think about these things?

Woman: You what? ... What did you say to me? ... I couldn't ... are you ... What are you trying to do to me? ... You promised you wouldn't mention it! / Today of all days!

Man: / I'm sorry. Baby calm down!

Woman: This is our special day! / You're ruining it!

Man: / Baby calm down it's alright, we don't need to do this, I just wasn't thinking that's all...

Woman: You have to stop telling me to calm down else I will rip your fucking ears off!

There is a pause followed by a loud thump from upstairs like that of something heavy toppling over. At this she explodes, and what follows appears more like a five year old girl's tantrum than anything else. She is inconsolably upset.

Woman: SHUT THE FUCK UP YOU LITTLE CUNT! ELSE I'LL COME AND GET YOU EARLY! YOU TWAT! I HATE YOU! *She kicks the table then goes to storm out of the room and upstairs. He grabs her. I've got to get that little tramp! I've got to get her in the face! LET GO OF ME! He pulls her back away from the door, throwing her onto the sofa where she flumps and stays dumbfounded for a moment. Pause. She looks at him incredulously.*

Man: Now calm down birdy we've / got to control ourselves, we can't stray from the plan and mess it all up now.

Woman: / What did you just do? Are you fucking kidding me? Don't you dare push me like that you little rat! I hate you to! You can't give me a baby! You can't make me a mum! So why the fuck / should I bother with you?

Man: / That's enough. Don't say something you'll regret.

Woman: Don't say something I'll regret! Don't marry someone I'll regret more like! *She is standing on the sofa by this point and picks up something and with a scream; she lifts it above*

her head to bring it crashing down at his feet. I'll say what I fucking like you prick! / I want a baby! I've always wanted one and I know I'd treat it nice! You thought that this would satisfy me? You think I'm fucking satisfied? When you can't get it up because I'm consenting! What the fuck! Is it not rough enough for you cause I'm a FUCKING WHIMP!

Man: / Shut up now, you're ruining our day.

That isn't fair.

Woman: Oh my God I want to do it NOW! / I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT THE PLAN I WANT TO HURT HER NOW!

Man: / Stop it! Shut up screaming will you? Someone will come. Stop else someone's gonna come. *He pushes the door shut.*

Woman: People shout all the time! We shout all the time! No-one ever comes you sad old fart! You don't deserve me! I'm young and I could have a baby with anyone, BUT YOU!

She pulls a picture off the wall and brings it crashing to the floor.

Pause.

Man: Don't you hurt our house ... I don't care what you wanna say ... you can say it ... just stop hurting our house. *They pause. He crumples to crouch on the floor with his back against the door and his head in his hands. She stays on the sofa; stood very still, she breathes hard looking at him. I bought this house for you ... this is where we live ... I'm sorry baby ... I am sorry ... I've tried giving you everything I can ... but ... I can't ... I want one too ... and I'd treat it good too ... I give it so much love ... He is crying and rubs his eyes forcibly with his palms, pushing them into his face. She's watching him but hasn't moved. He stops rubbing his face and looks at her.*

Please don't hate me.

He crawls and kneels at the sofa and takes her bare leg in his hand.

I want to make you happy.

He manages to pull her down to kneel in his lap. She has loosened her body but her face is stubborn like a stroppy spoilt child.

I really wish I could make you happy baby.

He kisses her wet face and wipes her tears away with his fingers, kissing her cheeks tenderly. She stays knelt in his lap but lets her head bow so their foreheads are touching.

And I'm sorry for making you cry.

Woman: Why do you have to talk like / that?

Man: / I know, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have / said anything.

Woman: / I can't believe you think I wouldn't be able to handle it! I'm not / a wimp!

Man: / I know you could, you'd be brilliant. I don't know why I said that!

(...)

Woman: This is our fun day and we don't get them very often and now I'm miserable.

Man: Don't be miserable any more sugar, we're gonna be okay, we'll find a way ... if that's what you want, and the want is just getting worst, then we have do something about it, I promise ... we'll adopt or something, / there's loads of kids without homes.

Woman: / We've talked about that and it's too dangerous, they'll come see the house, they'll ask us questions and test our responses, / we've gone over this.

Man: / They won't know, we're too good for that, we're too good.

Woman: But that's not it. I want to grow one. I want to make one myself ... If it's not mine we might not get along and ... it raises too many questions, people would know it lives here ... But that's still not it, I want to feel / it inside me.

Man: / I know baby, I know.

Pause. There are other things we can do.

Woman: I know.

Man: No I mean like other ways of getting you a baby.

Woman: We've already talked about taking a young one but / it's the same thing.

Man: / No that's not what I mean, listen to me.

Woman: ... What?

Man: I mean next time we could get a guy ... and we could use him ... his sperm ... and then we'd both be there and both be doing it together but he'll be like a third party and it'll be almost like we've done it ourselves ... plus it'll be another of our special days pet ... our celebration day ... it would just be extra special from then on because it would be the day the baby was made too.

Long pause.

What you thinking baby? ... Are you thinking about it?

Pause.

Woman: Yeah, I'm thinking about it ...

Pause.

Man: What do you think?

Woman: ... it would be special. And we could keep him until we are really sure ...

Man: Yeah sure thing

Woman: ... but I don't want to cheat on you. It's not the same as having female quests ... I mean ... wouldn't that bother you?

Man: ... I don't think so. I suppose part of me feels like I don't want anyone else in our circle. The things we like to do are our things and I'm scared that you're gonna love a baby more than me and then we'll stop the fun stuff. But then I think that if this was part of what we do, it would be like ... like really part of us. It would be special ... do you know what I mean?

Woman: I don't think it could ever come between us.

Man: No I don't really think that either. And this would be really special: part of the team because it would have been there at the very beginning.

Woman: ... Yes ... I could do that ... you would love it even if it wasn't really your own? ... Just yours spiritually.

Man: Yes. Of course I would ... but only if it was our day.

Woman: *Slowly.* Okay ... I think I like it!

Man: Yeah?

Woman: Yeah! We can totally do that!

Man: I know we can and / it's going to be wonderful!

Woman: I can't believe we didn't think of it sooner.

Man: I know, we'll have to plan it really well, and I don't just want some homeless misfit, / I want someone you think is really special, someone a bit like me.

Woman: / Oh god no!

Yes I want someone just like you. We have to plan it better than anything we've ever done. Be really careful. And I don't want to nab any old nobody. We should get to know them.

Man: Yeah we've got to befriend them first. / Yeah have them round, even get to know his family so we know everything about him and exactly what to expect.

Woman: / Invite them in.

Pause.

Woman: We're going to have a baby. *They hold each other and kiss.* I love you. I'm sorry I said those things, you know I don't mean the things I say when I get angry.

Man: I know baby, I hate that I make you angry and I want you to know that I'll do anything to keep you here with me.

Woman: In our / house.

Man: / In our house.

Pause. She sniffs.

Woman: I need a tissue.

Man: Stay there. *He sits her down and leaves the room, returning with a box of tissues. He leaves the door open. They sit holding each other on the sofa. There is a long pause. The light that is shining through the glass in the front door is suddenly blocked. It is apparent that someone is at their door. Neither of them notices the tapping immediately, perhaps thinking that it is coming from upstairs. The figure then knocks loudly. They suddenly take notice.*

Man: What is that? ... Is that ...?

He goes to the open inner door and peeks round withdrawing his head quickly.

Man: There's someone there!

She runs and turns off the music. There is a pause as they look at each other. The knock comes again.

Woman: We have to answer it... You go.

He waits a beat then goes to the front door. There is scuffling upstairs and the woman rushes out slamming the door behind her. She goes upstairs, we hear the door being opened and male voices are heard. We hear a floorboard creak slowly. Then the door is shut. Man enters the room with a package. Footsteps sound and the woman enters shutting the door softly behind her. They stand for a moment catching their breath.

Woman: What the hell did they want?

(...)

Who was it? Did you tell them we were in the middle of dinner?

Man: It was next door, we couldn't have heard the door earlier over the music. The postman left this package with him.

Pause.

Woman: That was it?

Man: Yeah.

She laughs. They both relax.

Woman: Why the fuck have you been ordering shit near the end of the month you plonker?

Man: I hadn't, I ordered it ages ago, didn't realize it would take this long.

Pause. She clutches her chest.

Woman: Oh my God my heart!

Man: It was fine, he was nice... I didn't think it would need so much packaging; it's only a little thing.

Woman: What is it then?

Man: It's for you.

Woman: Is it? Oh, then you are totally forgiven. Let's see!

Man: I would have wrapped it. Sorry.

She pecks him on the cheek and opens the package.

Woman: Where is it? Seriously why does it need this box? Ooo another box! *She shoves the outer packaging on the floor and opens up the jewellery box in her hands.* Oh it's beautiful, thank you! Wasn't that surprise ruined by unnecessary anxiety? *She kisses him.* I love it. Help me put it on. *She pulls out a necklace and he helps her with the clasp and kisses her neck, he has only just recovered from the shock.* Oh dear that got you all worried didn't it? Its ok, he's gone now and I've got my present and I love it! Okay?

Man: Yes. It suits you. Can we put the song back on its too tense in here?

Woman: Ha, I feel fine.

She puts the song back on repeat and turns it up. She dances to the music. In this next sequence the couple do not need to be taking their actions too seriously.

Man: That's some good moves you've got there, you been practicing?

Woman: I'm drunk. And happy.

Man: Good. You look so delicious I could eat you!

Woman: Well take some photos then. And maybe then you could eat them.

He brings in a Polaroid camera and begins to take photos which she poses for.

Man: Where are your shoes?

She puts them on and continues to pose.

Woman: I want you to make me look like a queen! No! A goddess! Do I look tall enough? Do I look powerful?

She climbs onto the sofa to pose.

Man: Like you could conquer mankind!

Woman: I want some of you as well, you look so smart. Come here, we'll take some of us both.

They take pictures together and she begins photographing him in various masculine poses, directing him.

Woman: Cute.

What a perfect figure of a man you are. Now sit back on the sofa, yeah and rest against the arm. Lean back. Now look up at me.

She stands over him and takes photos from above. She rests her heeled shoe against his upper chest. She takes more photos like this, pressing her heel in, then places it somewhere else.

Take it.

He takes her leg in his hands and kisses the shoe.

Now remove it ... no hands!

He takes the heel of the shoe in his mouth and slowly pulls it off with his teeth. She takes one last photo then puts it down and sits on him.

Woman: You are my man.

Man: And you my gal.

Woman: What is the time?

He looks at his watch.

Man: It nearly time. You fancy one last dance before we blow this thing out the water?

She whoops and jumps up, grabbing the bottle of champagne. They turn 'Thriller' up louder and they dance together with ecstasy about the room singing along loudly. They drunkenly mess about with the remainder of the food, picking up handfuls and feeding each other, and guzzling the remaining of the champagne. He picks her up for the last part of the song and spins her round laughing before falling down onto the sofa. A moment passes and as the song ends a timer goes off. They go ridged. He looks at his watch.

Woman: Is it?

Man: It's time for the countdown... you ready for it?

Woman: Yes thank God!

Man: *He waits.* 10, 9, / 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Woman: / I just want to say now that whatever happens, and whatever happens with this baby, and if anyone is ever clever enough to catch us, I want to say now that I love you and I never want to be apart from you.

Man: I love you too and I wouldn't be anything without you. *He pulls her to him.* You know that the first time we met I thought I wanted to kill you! Then when we started talking I realized it was something else entirely. *He looks at his watch.* Zero baby. *They kiss, he stands up, carrying her to the door in this embrace and puts her against it roughly. She replaces her feet on the floor.*

Man: How do I look?

Woman: You look vicious.

They kiss.

Let's fucking do it!

He pulls himself away and puts on the song. It starts to play. The woman screams with excitement as he scoops her up and carries her out the door and 'up the stairs'. What takes place off stage is viewed and heard through the projected footage mirroring the start. The camera flickers on and we see the guest sat in her underwear on a chair she is literally tided to. Her mouth is gagged. She has been there a while. The couple are not in shot.

Man: Hello again baby face. It's only us. You are a little slut aren't you; you've been two timing with both of us haven't you? Giving us both a little piece of the action?

Woman: We think you're very pretty and we enjoyed your company.

Man: Immensely.

Woman: Yes, before we met you we were desperately bored, in need of some fun and games you know.

Man: We've been married seven years now. Can you believe it? We consider ourselves a very sound couple. I don't think we'll ever part. But now and again we need a young thing like yourself just to spice up our lives a little.

Woman: Like I said we've really enjoyed your stay... but now we are going to have to part.

The girl cries. We hear the couple kiss.

Man: I'll take this, you go and play.

The woman walks into the frame as the man films.

Woman: Oh don't cry. I think she's sad to leave us. We really did love having you and you were a good sport but we've got ourselves really psyched up now so I'm afraid it's going to get a little rougher...

Man: Tell her about her brother.

Woman: Oh yes, how could I forget? Your brother was on TV! Sobbing and asking you to hold on, he's going to do all he can to find you and they will never give up. *She is stood behind her removing her dress.* He might have to though. We are very ... practical and ... organized people. At least he got on TV. You're famous now. That should make you happy. You've put your family in the spotlight.

Man: Give her a little kiss.

The girl tries to cry out but the woman grabs her hair and yanks it back, standing over her.

Woman: Shut it bitch! *She slaps her hard around the face. The girl lets out a muffled cry and immediately gets her hair yanked back.* Shut the fuck up you little cunt, you're gonna like what I do!

The projection is gradually fading out while the action offstage takes place and 'Thriller' grows steadily louder until it drowns out their voices and the video has faded to nothing.